

# Shared Services Performance Review Guidelines for Communicating and Resolving Issues

July 29, 2009

Governor Gregoire has requested State Auditor Sonntag's assistance with the shared services initiative in the form of a performance review, specifically in the areas of information technology and property management.

The Governor and the Auditor share an interest in working together constructively and collaboratively, while maintaining independence and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Toward that end, we have worked together to create the following guidelines for communicating and resolving concerns that arise in the course of conducting the review.

These guidelines are also reflected in a comparison of a performance audit and a performance review and the Auditor's letter to agency directors and deputies dated July 31, 2009. These documents and other information are available at the State Auditor's Web site at [www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov). Contact names, phone numbers and email addresses are included below.

- **Where does the idea for a performance review come from?**

A performance review may be requested by the Governor, by an agency, by a legislator, or initiated at the Auditor's discretion. An agency or legislator may request a review by sending a letter to the Auditor.

- **How will we know if our agency will be involved in a performance review?**

The Auditor will send a letter notifying agencies at the beginning of a review. This letter will describe the purpose and general scope of the review and provide contact information. Formal entrance conferences, engagement letters, and representation letters that are customary during an audit are not necessary for a review. However, shortly after the notification letter has been sent, the Auditor will invite participating agencies to an informational meeting.

- **Who is the agency contact for a performance review?**

The lead audit staff will contact the deputy director at the beginning of a review to ensure the reviewers interact with the agency staff most knowledgeable about the subject of the review. Each agency designates its primary contact for a performance review. Over the course of the review, there will likely be many exchanges of information among various audit and agency staff. Because of the broad scope and cross-functional nature of most performance reviews, the deputy director of the agency or the program lead for the line of business under review would be a good choice for the agency liaison role.

- **Who will communicate about the review while it is in progress?**

The Governor's and Auditor's offices have each designated two staff people to help coordinate the shared services review. These four people, whose contact information is included below, will meet regularly to coordinate the implementation of the review. We plan to use existing communication forums to provide updates and seek feedback as the project progresses. Regular and open communication of goals, expectations, roles and responsibilities will help avoid unnecessary conflicts and confusion, and will ensure timely and quality reviews.

- **How will we resolve issues or conflicts that may arise during the review?**

Even with the best efforts to keep communication channels open and work constructively and collaboratively, misunderstandings or conflicts may arise that could affect the quality or timeliness of a review. Such issues are best resolved at the lowest level, but should be escalated when necessary to ensure constructive and timely resolution. If such an issue does arise, here is the process we will use to resolve it:

1. The Auditor's and agency's project or program staff will discuss and attempt to resolve the issue.
2. If they cannot reach resolution, the issue is escalated to the Auditor's shared services project lead and the agency's deputy director.
3. If they cannot reach resolution, the issue is escalated to the Auditor's Deputy for Statewide Performance Review and the Governor's Policy Director.

- **Will agencies have a chance to do a technical review of the draft report?**

Because performance reviews do not result in findings and tend to focus on cross-cutting functions rather than individual agencies, the technical review process often used in an audit does not apply the same way in a review. However, the Auditor will ask the agencies most directly affected by the review to check pertinent sections of the draft report for technical accuracy. The Governor's Performance Audit and Review Liaison will coordinate a review of a near-final draft of the report before the final draft is produced.

- **Will agencies have to formally respond to the review?**

The report will have conclusions and recommendations. Unlike an audit, there will be no findings to which an agency must respond. For performance reviews of functions that cut across multiple state agencies, the Auditor's staff will provide the Governor's liaison with a complete final draft report and an opportunity to review and comment prior to public release.

- **How will the report be released to the public?**

Before a review is released to the public, the Auditor's staff will provide a briefing for the agencies most directly affected by the review and to the Governor's Executive Policy Director. The review will be transmitted to the Governor and the Legislature with a cover letter from the Auditor, and will be posted on the Auditor's Web site.

For more information or assistance, please contact:

- Kimberly Cregeur, Governor's liaison for performance audits and reviews  
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